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R E M A R K S

On the Evidence delivered on the

P E T I T I O N

PRESENTED BY THE

West-India Planters and Merchants,

T O T H E

Hon. the House of Commons,

On the 16th of *March* 1775,

As it was introduced at the Bar and summed up

By Mr. G L O V E R,

So far as the same respects

BARBADOES and the LEEWARD ISLANDS.

In a Letter to a MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.

By a WEST-INDIA PLANTER.

— Et nunc quiescerem et tacerem libenter, nisi hæc
quoque pro patriâ dimicatio esset.

LIV. 1. 5.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. BEW, No. 28, *Pater-noster Row*,
M.DCC.LXXVII.

(Price One Shilling.)



ERRATA

Page 19. l. 22. for *account*, read *amount*.

Page 41. l. 1. for *been the*, read *been by the*.



P R E F A C E.

AS the pamphlet to which the subsequent letter is an answer has been published so long since as the year 1775, and no notice has been taken of it till now, it may seem requisite to give some reason for such delay, and the present publication.

Mr. Glover's production came to the hands of the writer of this letter whilst he resided in the West-Indies: from thence he transmitted to a friend his sentiments on the matter, which it contains; being now returned to England, he has been induced to give them to the public, in hopes that it may convince them, that the British West-India islands, which are estimated at the value of sixty mil-

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lions,

lions, are in no danger of being lost to this country, whatever may be the event of the American rebellion. Had the danger been as great as it was represented, however fit the information thereof might have been for the minister's private ear, the public declaration, much less the industrious propagation of it, must have been, to the highest degree impolitic, and productive of the most pernicious consequences.

The too successful interruption the Americans have given to the West-India commerce, shews the effect of such conduct to have been no less than pointing the parricide dagger, against that part of the parent's breast, which was supposed the most vulnerable.

Whatever, therefore, may be the event of this appeal to the public, the writer of this letter flatters himself, the uprightness of his intentions, will secure him the thanks of all those who wish to be truly informed, in a matter of so great national importance.

REMARKS,

REMARKS, &c.

S I R,

I AM not a little pleased with the assurance you have given me that the conversation which passed between us, soon after my late arrival from the West-Indies, has made you consider the situation of things in that part of the world, in a very different point of view from that in which they appeared to you on the examination of the gentlemen, who attended at the bar of the house of commons, in support of the petition of the West-India planters and merchants, on the 16th day of March 1775.

Although your politeness induced you to tell me, that you doubted not the truth of the representation which I made of the situa-
B tion

tion of the West-India islands; yet I cannot help suspecting you may still have some reluctance to discredit what was so openly declared at your bar, as the sentiments of so respectable a body of men : by persons of such reputable characters as the gentlemen bear who gave you their testimony upon this occasion. As they are universally acknowledged to be men of abilities and experience, I was unable to conceive how they could delineate a picture so very unlike the object it was intended to represent. I have therefore been induced scrupulously to re-examine the opinion which I had long entertained upon this subject; the result of which is, that I am more firmly convinced of the truth of it. I am therefore induced to state my sentiments thereon, more fully than it was possible for me to do in the desultory conversation of the table. And as the subject is of national importance, I shall make no apology for taking this occasion of laying my thoughts before the public, and of addressing them to you.

No man has an higher opinion, than I have, of the respectable characters of the petitioners,
and

and particularly of the gentlemen who were examined in support of the petition. I do not, I will not believe, that they meant to misrepresent or to deceive: but I hope to be pardoned if I apprehend that gentlemens imaginations may, in this case, have been possessed either by their fears, or by that cloudy vapour of party spirit, which unfortunately for this country, too frequently affects the judgment of some of the worthiest and best subjects in the community.

I must, however, premise, that the observations which will appear in the following pages, are chiefly confined to Barbadoes and the Leeward islands. I know but little of Jamaica, but from that little I am induced to believe the circumstances of that and the ceded islands, are similar in a multiplicity of respects.

Without, therefore, intending any reflection on the integrity of the gentlemen who have given different accounts of the state of the West-India islands, I shall proceed to shew their real situation, as it appears to my comprehension; having no object in view but

the establishment of truth and the prosperity of my country. " This information I shall
 " present in its genuine simplicity, untainted
 " by prejudice, passion or party, not looking
 " towards any one quarter in preference to
 " another, without courting any, and mean-
 " ing to offend none."

To this intent it is necessary to enter into an examination of Mr. Glover's pamphlet, and particularly of Mr. Walker's evidence, who, p. 10, is pleased to say, " that the
 " quantity of provisions raised in Barbadoes
 " are not sufficient to maintain the inhabi-
 " tants for four months, unless the four
 " months be those in the beginning of the
 " year in the season for ground provisions." If the gentlemen of that island planted provisions in their grounds, so sparingly, when Mr. Walker resided among them, I cannot help thinking ~~they were mistaken~~ in that conduct; but if since they have had reason to believe, that the American supplies would be withheld, they have persevered to act in the like manner, and have neglected to provide themselves with a sufficiency of provisions,
 either

either by growing or procuring them from Europe; may it not be justly pronounced that they will deserve a great part of those calamities which such inattention may bring upon them? With respect, however, to the time in which the natural provisions of the islands are in season, I presume Mr. Walker is mistaken. For, from the month of September to the month of February, both inclusive, the ground yields successive crops of great or Indian corn, yams, eddows, and Guinea corn, not to mention the different kinds of peas and pulse; so that there are six months in the year in which provisions of one kind or another are gathered in. Yams and eddows will keep good till the month of May or June, and Guinea corn, with proper care, may be preserved through the whole year.

It cannot be expected that nature has exempted the West-Indies from such unfavourable incidents as attend the other climes of the globe; or that no inclemency of seasons will disappoint the hopes of the cultivator. On the contrary, I allow that such events are more frequently to be expected between
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the tropics than in the more temperate zones. Barbadoes, in particular, has for some preceding years been very unfortunately circumstanced. Frequent and continued droughts, together with a great and almost an infinite variety of vermin, have rendered the labours of the sugar-planter vain and unprofitable. But, except in the year 1774, the like misfortune, in an equal degree, has not attended those who have cultivated provisions; and the latter end of that year, as well as during great part of the year 1775, the seasons in that island have been more favourable than usual.

From Mr. Walker's account it is manifest, that it is some considerable time since he left Barbadoes; and he has been the island agent for several years. He does not, indeed pretend, ever to have visited the other Leeward islands, and the culture of those which were ceded to us by the last peace, has, I believe, commenced since he left the West-Indies.

Upon what grounds, therefore, does that gentleman take upon him to say, p. 11, "that the Leeward islands produce neither corn
" nor

" nor ground provisions worth mentioning,
 " except Tortola, which there is reason to
 " believe is not yet quite engrossed by the
 " sugar cane?" Does the residence of that
 gentleman in Barbadoes, some time since,
 sufficiently authorise him to pronounce so de-
 cisively with respect to the state of the other
 islands in its vicinity? I think myself fully
 warranted to aver, that the gentlemen of
 Barbadoes, in general, know less of the other
 sugar colonies than the inhabitants of any
 other island in the West-Indies. They have,
 with great reason, a very high opinion of the
 salubrity of that beautiful spot; with much
 less reason do they consider most, if not all, the
 other islands to be very unhealthy; and that
 opinion prevents almost every one of them
 from quitting his happier clime, to visit
 such as are deemed less healthy. To so great
 a degree does their apprehension of the un-
 healthiness of the other islands operate on
 their conduct, that even of those few, who
 have attempted the cultivation of lands in
 some of the ceded islands, a very small num-
 ber have ventured to reside on, or even visit,
 their

their possessions. But I, who have been much in most of the Leeward islands, can assure Mr. Walker, and all such as have been influenced by the account he has given, that great quantities of provisions are annually raised in all of them. The negroes of many estates in Antigua and St. Kitt's are fed chiefly from their own grounds. Great crops of yams are raised, in those islands, on such lands as are proper for them ; and one gentleman's* estate, in Antigua, last year, yielded so large a crop of those roots, as I am convinced was of greater advantage to him than the canes, which a like quantity of ground produced to any other person in that colony. Montserrat and Nevis grow more provisions, in proportion, than either of the last-mentioned islands. If Mr. Walker be mistaken in his account, respecting the other Leeward islands, he is much more so with relation to those under the Grenada government, to which his observations are wholly inapplicable. In Grenada and Tobago are planted great quantities of cotton ; consequently of corn :

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* Samuel Byam, Esq;

Carriacou and the other Grenadines are productive of little else. Coffee estates, of which there are many in Grenada, Saint Vincent, and Dominica, are replete with provisions of all sorts. Besides the kind already mentioned, all those islands abound with plantains; and some of them with Cassava.

The manifest tendency of Mr. Walker's evidence was to shew that, the principal and staple-provisions by which the inhabitants of the West-Indies are supported are corn and ground provisions. But had his knowledge extended to the real state of the ceded islands, he would have been convinced that his observations are inapplicable to them, as well as to the French islands in their vicinity.

Is it not a little extraordinary, that a gentleman, who resided so long at Barbadoes, should seem so totally unacquainted with the use of plantains and cassava, as food for negroes? for to what other cause can the not mentioning them, in his evidence, be ascribed? although neither of these vegetable productions (the most profitable and nutritious food which can be given to them) might have been

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cultivated in Barbadoes, during the residence of Mr. Walker in that island, I am well informed there are now considerable quantities of plantains growing in that part of it, called Scotland. And I flatter myself that Mr. Walker will not be displeased to hear that the abundance which is grown in the islands of Tobago, Grenada, St. Vincent, and Dominica, has been, for upwards of eight months in the year, more than sufficient for the use of the inhabitants; and will for the future, I doubt not, be increased sufficiently, to enable them to supply the inhabitants of Barbadoes and the other islands, if at any time hereafter dry weather or any other accident may reduce them to the want of such assistance.

In consequence of the commerce, which is carried on between Barbadoes and the Dutch settlements on the main, plantains have been frequently brought from the latter; and I doubt not they may be had, together with Indian corn, in considerable quantities, both from thence, and from the Spanish colonies. I mention these particulars to shew that Barbadoes and some other of the West-
India

India islands have resources which can preserve them from the dread of famine, and consequently their negroes from insurrections upon that account, more readily at hand than Mr. Walker has supposed them. I consider these resources, however, only as a provision against temporary distress; for I have no doubt that several of the Leeward islands do not, and the others need not depend, so absolutely, on American, or even on any other foreign supplies; for their subsistence, as the public has been so diligently taught to believe; and which, before I have finished this letter, I hope will be elucidated and explained to your entire satisfaction.

I do not deny that North-American provisions have been the principal support of the islands long since settled; or indeed that all the islands did not derive great part of their sustenance from thence. But the question at your bar was not so much relative to that particular, as it was to enquire, by what other means they can subsist; or whether they are able to do so, without that supply. Rice is an article which Mr. Walker supposes to be necessary

cessary, and not to be had but from America. If I can give credit to my information, it has been cultivated in Jamaica and Dominica sufficiently to shew the practicability of it. But on what account is rice supposed to be so necessary a part of sustenance? I know no purpose to which it can be used that may not be more beneficially answered by substituting cassava meal in its stead.

Mr. Walker proceeds in his evidence to assert, one of the most material articles of provision in the West-Indies to be salted fish. This, says he, p. 14, (using the word in contrast with bread) “ is the meat of all the
 “ lower ranks of people in Barbadoes and the
 “ Leeward islands; it is the meat of *all* the
 “ slaves in *all* the West-Indies; nor is it dis-
 “ dained by persons of better condition. The
 “ North-American navigation also furnishes
 “ the sugar-colonies with salt from Turk’s
 “ island, Sal Tortuga, and Anguilla.”

I make no doubt that Mr. Walker was convinced, that what he delivered in the preceding particulars, was strictly just; but he was nevertheless mistaken: probably he
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decided on the other islands, by what he had formerly seen in Barbadoes! it is there only, that salted fish is the principal meat of the slaves; in all the other islands, herrings are substituted in its stead, in the proportion, one with the other, of more than four to one. And what reason can be offered, if salted fish should not be brought to them from Newfoundland, why the negroes, in Barbadoes, should not substitute herrings in lieu of salt fish, as well as those in Antigua.*

Neither does the supply of salt depend upon the North-American navigation; not to mention the Cape de Verd islands, at which vessels for the future will call more frequently

* The fish brought to the West-Indies from Newfoundland, for the supply of the slaves, is of an inferior kind from that which is sent to the European markets; consequently whoever catches the fish, of Newfoundland, whether they sail from the West of England, or from Boston, must have the same quantity of the inferior fish to send to the West-India market. It is not improper here to observe, that last fall a gale of wind injured the latter fishery very much, which occasioned rather a scarcity of West-India fish, that being the time when most of the inferior fish is generally taken.

ly in their way from Europe to the islands than they have hitherto done, for cattle, &c. and where they may be also supplied with salt. The salt ponds at Grenada and St. Kitt's furnish great abundance. In a dry season it also may be had in very large quantities at Antigua. Besides Anguilla, which is one of the Virgin islands, there is another of them called Salt island, from whence many sail of North-American vessels have often fetched their cargoes in a year. These islands alone, to say nothing of St. Martin's, can furnish more salt than all the sugar-colonies stand in need of. And, indeed, no great quantity is absolutely necessary; the salt remaining in the barrels of beef and pork from Ireland nearly supplying their exigencies.

These are facts the truth of which, numbers of gentlemen now in England can testify. And I am happy in being warranted to add, that notwithstanding the fears so prophetically expressed, by Mr. Walker, on the 16th March 1775, notwithstanding the North-American supplies, have been strictly withheld, agreeable to the threats of the *serene* congress, Barbadoes

does and the Leeward islands, when I left them, in June last, had been, to that time, preserved from the dreadful consequence of famine. And the whole result of that congressional interdiction had only proved, that provisions had not been so plenty, and consequently not so cheap as formerly : But still by no means so dear, as they frequently were during the course of the last war. Even the scarcity which did arise was undoubtedly in some measure increased by an embargo, laid, in Barbadoes, on the exportation of all kinds of provisions. This event consequently prevented the merchants from ordering out fresh supplies from Europe, and the masters of vessels, bound to that island, from bringing them out on their own accounts. Several vessels to my knowledge left Barbadoes without landing their provisions, or even entering their vessels, merely from an apprehension that, if the price there should not answer their expectations, they should be prohibited from carrying them to another market. In Barbadoes, (as I think) the governor and council are authoriz'd by an insular law, to lay an embargo on provisions, when-

whenever they may think proper; in some of the other islands, where there is no such law, the example has been followed, I dare believe, with the best intentions; but sure I am, sir, you will coincide in this opinion, that wherever such power may be lodged, the exercise of it requires the utmost prudence and precaution; and where the former is not, the latter is not more illegal then ruinous. Fortunately for Antigua and St. Kitt's the embargoes, which in those islands were laid on the exportation of provisions, were but for a short time, and expired before the knowledge of such a step could be so extended, as to prove of much disadvantage to them; but that at Barbadoes does, I believe, still continue. May it not, therefore, be reasonably presumed, (Barbadoes being the only island from whence a complaint of a great scarcity has been heard, even supposing it as considerable as the assembly of that island has set it forth, and their governor totally mistaken in that matter) that it may have been
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been occasioned by this circumstance? * I own myself inclined to think, if the subscriptions, which were publicly solicited in the Barbadoes newspapers, for a much worse purpose, had been applied, in bounties, to encourage the importation of provision into their own island, the inhabitants would have been less necessitated to have petitioned the throne for assistance; or, had they been forced to such a measure, it would have appeared with a better grace.

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* An embargo on the exportation of provisions, from any island in the West-Indies, appears to me not only an hardship, but a species of cruelty and oppression, which cannot be too much discountenanced. The merchants stores, in towns in the West-Indies are always full of weevil and other vermin; so that provisions decay much sooner in them, than when they are kept at the plantations in the country. In the latter, they are in more roomy places, which are cooler and better ventilated; and if the planter wants provisions, is it not proper for him to buy and store them himself? Why should the merchant be forced to keep provisions in stores for the planter at his own risque and expence? If a want is only apprehended, and the merchant is obliged to keep a large stock of perishable goods upon his hands, should any considerable fresh supplies arise, he will either be unable to dispose of his old stock, or must do it at a great loss.

It seems that Mr. Walker foresaw there was an expedient which might effectually prevent this dreaded famine : and I add, would also have superseded the necessity of embargoes. But this expedient he considered both as distant and ruinous. Let us examine that opinion, and we shall find him mistaken in both these suppositions. The people have not only survived the horrors of the predicted famine, but they have had time sufficient to provide against that dreaded evil. May we not, therefore, conclude that the remedy was neither so distant, nor the danger so menacing as Mr. Walker's imagination so tenderly suggested ? I hope to convince him the expedient would, not only, have proved far from being ruinous, but the most salutary and beneficial measure that could have been or can be adopted in most of the Leeward islands, (more particularly in Barbadoes) and this even if the Americans had not rebelled, or shall again be subjected to their duty. But the proof of this will come more properly after a few remarks on some other errors.

I could

I could enumerate some mistakes respecting staves and lumber ; but "*non ego paucis offender maculis.*" It is an indisputable truth that all the islands will, in different degrees, be distressed through the want of them, and I know not how, or from whence we can be supplied, with hoops and staves for Rum puncheons at any reasonable rate ; unless the legislature, of this kingdom, shall think proper to permit them to be carried from the places of their growth in Europe, directly to the West-Indies.

I shall now proceed to that part of the evidence, with which I am not a little surprised. Mr. Walker says, p. 27, "they (meaning the West-India islands) "did give a part" of all their products, in exchange to North-America : but the middle colonies had refused to take molasses, syrups, pannels, coffee, and pimento, since the first day of December 1774." Let it be supposed Mr. Walker was uninformed that the account of all these, taken by the Americans from our islands, was not an object of the least importance. If his long absence from the West-

Indies should have effaced the remembrance of that fact, it is nevertheless notorious to every person who has been lately resident in that part of the globe. But where did he learn that the quantity of sugar, purchased by the Americans from the British sugar-colonies in the West-Indies, amounted to 25,000 hogsheads ? I apprehend this to be a mistake of more than three parts in four. Jamaica, I am well informed, did never sell more than 2000 hogsheads, to America, before the year 1775 ; and if an apprehension of a scarcity of sugar, in America, might, that year, increase the export to North-America from thence, I am well warranted to say, the excess has not amounted to above 500 hogsheads. From the official accounts of sugar exported to America, from several of the islands, which I have seen, I am authorised to assert, that the whole quantity, shipped from the other islands, does not amount to so much as the Americans purchase at Jamaica.

With respect to the quantity of refined sugar, shipped from hence to America, I am
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less capable of judging, because I have no certain *data* on which to form a calculation. Yet, from an examination of the bills of entry, I am induced to imagine, Mr. Walker is not less mistaken in that respect, than he was in the quantity he *supposed* to be shipped from the West-Indies. The following considerations will, I flatter myself, shew that I have not founded my opinion, of this particular, on fallacious grounds.

In the first place, it is notorious that the North-Americans purchase, by much the greatest part of their sugars from the French, Dutch and Danish islands. By Mr. Walker's account, p. 32, the whole quantity of sugar imported into Great Britain and Ireland doth not amount to more than 170,000 hogsheads of 10 cwt. which are only equal to 120,000 hogsheads of the common weight, or thereabouts. If therefore 17,000 of those casks are re-exported to America, as refined sugar, the Americans consume 42,000 hogsheads of sugar produced by the British colonies. And if we reckon the quantities they import from the foreign islands, to amount
but

but to one half more than they obtain from ours (which every gentleman acquainted with the American trade in the West-Indies will readily allow to be a moderate supposition) the Americans must then consume as much sugar as the inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland; and this, I suppose, Mr. Walker will hardly think probable.

Besides this, it is notorious that molasses, in a great degree, supplies the place of sugar in most of the New-England provinces; it is well known also that a number of refining houses are erected at Boston, and in other principal towns in New-England, as well as in New-York and Philadelphia: add to this that great numbers of the inhabitants, on the continent of America, live in parts of the country so remote from the sea-ports, that they cannot easily supply themselves with sugar in considerable quantities; but are contented with honey which the woods produce in great abundance, particularly in the back parts of Virginia and the Carolinas.* Nor will

* It is the boast of some of the Americans, that they stand in no need of sugar from the West-Indies; because

will the dependence, on North-America, for the consumption of their Rum be of more consequence than that for their subsistence.

That the greatest part of the Leeward island Rum did go to America is certain ; and consequently, the planters will, for a time, be subject to some inconvenience, from the loss of that market ; but I hope to make it clear that such a loss will be neither great nor permanent.

It is universally acknowledged that Rum, in great quantities, has been distilled at Boston from foreign molasses. The exact quantity I am unable to ascertain ; but I have heard it frequently asserted, by men who were well acquainted with the matter, that the still-houses, at Boston and Charles Town, before the rebellion, made at the rate of 15,000 gallons, or about 150 puncheons a day. Whether this be true or not, I do not positively affirm, neither do I know how many

(as they assert) they can make as good from the inspissated juice of the sugar maple. If they either do or can avail themselves of this succedaneum: it will further lessen the consumption of West-India Muscovado.

ny days in the year they worked their stills ; but the amount of the whole must have been very considerable. Part of it was consumed in the fishery, another considerable part was shipped to the coast of Africa, and a third was used in the country, and in the Indian trade. Two of these markets, Africa and the fishery, must now be supplied from the West-Indies. And great quantities of our Rum will find their way to the Indians thro' the province of Canada. Add to this what will be wanted for the supply of the troops and seamen, who are engaged against the rebels in America. Is there not reason therefore to believe that, even in the article of Rum, no essential injury will be received by the planters? The price of Rum this year (in all the West-India islands, except Barbadoes) has been within about 3d per gallon the same it was last. And the reason why the Rum of that island has not borne an equal price with that of the others is, perhaps, occasioned by the disrepute into which it has lately fallen. At all events that resource which Mr. Walker judiciously indicates, and per-

perhaps the only effectual one, is still left : to reduce the duty upon the importation of that article into this kingdom, which will proportionably increase the consumption. No objection can justly arise to that mode, unless apprehension should prevail, in his majesty's ministers, that the revenue will thereby suffer. How far that may be the case it is impracticable peremptorily to decide ; but I flatter myself it will be found that if the duties on Rum were properly reduced, it would, in a great measure, prevent the consumption of those large quantities of French and foreign brandies which are continually smuggled on all the coasts of the kingdom ; and I submit to those who are better acquainted with the subject than I am, whether it be not probable, that the increased quantity of the sale will more than compensate for the diminution of the duty.

I shall now proceed to a full reply of that part of Mr. Walker's evidence which I have but slightly touched upon in the preceding pages.

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That the expedient which he proposed as the means of supplying the West-India islands with provisions is neither remote nor ruinous. That it was not too distant, needs no argument to prove. Let the facts speak for themselves; a year and half has lapsed since the danger was represented to be so imminent, and hitherto no great mischief has happened. I do not find, indeed, that to preserve themselves, or their negroes, from famine, the planters have caused any great quantity of provisions to be shipped, notwithstanding the prices in England have been so reasonable as very little to exceed the common rate of American provisions of the same kinds, *to the planters*, in the West-Indies. Yet the time when the indigenal provisions are the most scarce is in the months of July and August. In September, the early crops of great corn begin to be broke in. Before that time, I mean in the two preceding months, it is no wonder, if the estates of improvident people may have suffered such distress, it is to be supposed, will make them more careful for the future. It appears to be no difficult undertaking to convince every gentleman of property

perty in the West-Indies, that the expedient of producing their own provisions is not only very far from being a ruinous undertaking, but the proper measure that prudence ought to have dictated to them, on the first appearance of the American supplies being to be withheld, and that it will be exceedingly advantageous, even if the rebellion in America shall be terminated. Let me examine in what manner it will affect the island of Barbadoes.

The sugar which is produced in that island annually, amounts upon an average, according to Mr. Walker's account, to about 15,000 common hogheads. Let us suppose those hogheads to weigh 12 cwt. 2 qrs. at the king's beam, and bring the planter 16l. sterling per hoghead clear. I am persuaded that every gentleman acquainted with the quality of Barbadoes muscovado, will own I have done him ample justice in the preceding estimation.* The whole amount of their sugar,

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* It ought not to be concealed that very little Muscovado-sugar is shipped from Barbadoes, most of the planters, who have the necessary buildings and sufficient strength for that purpose, clay their sugars, which, although

at this valuation, consists of 240,000*l*. Let us suppose that this sugar yields 15,000 puncheons of Rum, at 1*s*. 4*d*. sterling per gallon, or 100,000*l*. more, which will make the net value of their produce, omitting ginger, aloes, cotton, &c. 340,000*l*. to which add, if you please, for those articles, 30,000*l*. and the whole will amount to 370,000*l*. sterling. This is the produce of 100,000 acres of land. Now let us suppose that 50,000 of these acres are taken from the culture of sugar, and applied to the purpose of raising provisions, and then it will appear whether the change will be ruinous or profitable.

I shall begin with plantains. Let us suppose, 26,000 acres be employed in raising that vegetable.*

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though it lessens the quantity, considerably improves the quality, and proportionably increases the price at home. With the advantages of this mode of refining sugar I am not well acquainted; I therefore follow where Mr. Walker leads, in calculating upon the quantity of Musvado.

* Plantains should be cultivated in low or, at least, in flat ground, and be sheltered from the wind, which is very

They generally are, or ought to be, planted at ten feet distance from each other; and every stock should be suffered to bear three, or four trees; which, in good ground, I have found, by experience, will be sufficient. Let my calculation be made upon a medium of three trees to a stock, or 1,296 upon an acre; each of these trees, in the course of the year, will probably produce a bunch of the fruit; and this will be an ample weekly provision, of the bread kind, for one man, or the produce of the whole 20,000 acres, to speak within compass, for 400,000 men for one year.

Let me next consider what will be the produce of an acre of cassava.

That root is generally supposed to produce about 25 barrels of meal, per acre; I will call it only Twenty. Twenty barrels of meal, at

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very injurious to that plant. The soil should be rather loose, and of a warm marly kind. Land, which much abounds with marle or limestone, seldom produces a strong good bodied sugar. On that account it will be more profitably employed in raising plantains: but flat land is generally planted with canes, on account of the ease with which it is wrought.

32 gallons to the barrel, contain 640 gallons of meal, which, at one gallon per week, for each person, will be 640 weeks provision for one man.*

Ten thousand acres, therefore, planted with cassava, will produce the food of 123,000 men for one year.

Yams are another very useful and beneficial esculent root, of the potatoe kind, and generally produce, upon an average, about 10, or 12,000lb. per acre. The full allowance of this vegetable is 24 lb. per week, or 416 weeks provisions for one man.

Ten thousand acres, therefore, will consequently supply the sustenance of 80,000 people for twelve months.

Great corn produces about 15 or 20 bushels per acre, and will yield two crops annually, or one of Great corn, and another of Guinea corn, which produces about the same quantity.

If

* One of the very excellent qualities of this food is, that if it be properly prepared, and kept in very dry storehouses, it is not liable to be destroyed by vermin, or subject to decay for almost any length of time; and one pint of this meal is full as nourishing as a pint and half of flour.

If we suppose each acre to produce 30 bushels in the year; the whole of the land will produce 300,000 bushels *per annum*, and allowing 10 pints of corn, per week, to each man, every acre will produce 192 weeks provisions for an individual, or one year's sustenance for 36,500.

Thus it appears that 50,000 acres of land will feed a greater number of people than are in all the West-Indies, *viz.*

20,000 in plantains	-	400,000
10,000 in cassava	- -	123,000
10,000 in yams	- -	80,000
10,000 in corn	- -	36,500
		<hr/>
		639,500

The number of inhabitants in Jamaica and in all the West India islands are not estimated at more than 450,000: there can be no doubt therefore, that an ample provision of the bread kind for that number is to be obtained from 50,000 acres of land.

Let us next examine the value of this produce.

It

It has appeared that this quantity of land in canes at Barbadoes produces 185,000*l.* sterling, or about 3*l.* 10*s.* per acre. Suppose the above-mentioned provisions to be sold, the amount of it will be near 20*l.* sterling per acre, viz.

20,800,000 bunches of plantain,	
at 6 <i>d.</i> sterling the bunch	- 520,000
200,000 barrels of cassava meal,	
at 1 <i>s.</i> sterling the barrel	- 150,000
1,000,000 cwt. of yams, at 5 <i>s.</i>	- 250,000
300,000 bushels of corn, at 3 <i>s.</i>	- 45,000
	<hr/>
	£ 965,000

Considerable as this calculation may appear the truth of it will not be denied by any man who is competently a judge of it. True it is that Barbadoes cannot avail itself of the whole of such an advantage, because it has no market, in which so large a quantity of provisions may be vended; but in proportion as the inhabitants stand in need of it, they may enjoy the benefit. It sufficiently evinces, however, that this expedient is not ruinous, and the fact undoubtedly is, that such a number

ber of acres, cultivated in the preceding manner, will have those effects amongst the whole, and it proves most clearly, the folly of those proprietors, who depend upon foreign supplies for the maintenance of their negroes.

Perhaps it may be objected, by the gentlemen of Barbadoes, Antigua and St. Kitt's, that the want of seasonable weather, in those islands, will render it difficult to raise plantains in any considerable quantity, and that, where they have land and situations proper for that cultivation, they are liable to be destroyed by hurricanes, or even by sudden gusts of wind; and, on that account, are a too precarious dependence.

I own these observations to be, in some degree, just; but that circumstance I believe is chiefly owing to the mismanagement of the gentlemen in those islands: they appropriate all their flat land to the cultivation of the sugar-cane, and plant bananas and plantains, only in the mountains, or on the sides of gullies, where they certainly are more subject to the preceding accidents. Nor is that the sole ill consequence which attends that manner of planting them, from being more ex-

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posed to eddy winds, they do not bear in such abundance, nor are the bunches either so large or so numerous : but if these gentlemen can be persuaded to plant some of their flat land, with these vegetables, I am convinced their objections would soon vanish.

Plantains love a moist situation, and should be sheltered from the wind. Land so circumstanced, though not very rich, will yield liberally. As a proof of this truth, I beg leave to refer to what has been done on the estate in Antigua, called the Cassava Garden ; where a considerable tract of land was, about two years since, stocked with plantains. It had never been worth to the proprietor 10s. per acre, and has since yielded such a quantity of provision, that there is the greatest reason to expect it will not in future be less profitable than I have previously calculated.* The in-

* It may not be improper here to observe, that when the dry weather sets in, plantains cease to produce ; so that in the months of February, March, April, and May, very few trees blossom : excessive draught sometimes, also, occasions the fruit to fall after it is formed ; so that in the months of May, June, July and August, a plantain-walk yields but little ; but in the months of November,

injury sometimes done to plantain walks, by heavy gales, makes it necessary for the planter to be provided also with a quantity of cassava. This vegetable is less liable to such accidents; and is, besides, the most wholesome and nutritious of all food for the weak, sickly and infirm, and far superior to rice †

Mr. Walker pronounces that some land is very proper for the sugar-cane, which will not produce corn. Be it so; but will it bring forth no other kind of provision? if it be of that nature, I am confident it is not worth cultivating. No good land, as far as my experience goes, will refuse to bear provisions

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ber, December, January, February and March, there is a superabundance, which, in the islands where plantains are generally cultivated, used to rot upon the trees. But it is now well known that ripe plantains are as good, if not better, than corn for feeding or fattening all kind of stock: horses, mules, cattle, sheep and fowls are all equally fond of them, which is a circumstance of very great advantage.

† I have been informed that the root of the plant, called the *Indian arrow* is likewise a most excellent food; should that be the case, it may also make a considerable addition to the indigenal provisions, of the islands, as it is a plant, not only easily raised, but one that is with great difficulty eradicated, from ground it once takes possession of.

of some kind or other ; and it is not to be imagined that any person will be advised to plant any thing in land not proper to produce it. Some kind of plants require a loose, others a more tenacious soil. The varieties of soil are nearly the same all over the world. But admit, for a moment, that some of the islands are improper for raising plantains, or any other particular species of provision. There are others in their neighbourhood, from whence they may be supplied, at a very easy expence, provided the port charges, on the passage-boats, be reduced to a reasonable standard : these are, at present, so high, that the expence of entering and clearing one of those vessels, at the island where she loads and discharges her lading, amounts to more than the value of a small cargo of provisions. Those islands which, from being too subject to wet weather, are improper for the growth of one species of food, are nevertheless proper for others : Plantains grow best where the rains are the most frequent : too much wet is injurious to yams and eddows ; so that if a constant intercourse be promoted amongst the whole, by lessening the difficulty and expence

pence of freight, they would mutually assist and support each other.*

But should gentlemen still persist, that in the old islands they cannot raise plantains in the proportion, per acre, which I have mentioned, they must nevertheless allow that the price, at which I have estimated them, is less than half that which has been usually paid, even before the interruption of the American commerce. Three bits, or about 15d. sterling, per bunch, having been often given for plantains brought to Barbadoes from Demerara and Tobago. If, therefore, it should be necessary, in those islands, to employ double the quantity of land which I have estimated, for the purpose of producing food for their
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* Yams are not raised in abundance in some of the ceded islands, as in St. Kitt's and Antigua; they require not only a loose soil, but one that has been often turned up and exposed to the influence of the Sun and the atmosphere. This plant, likewise, is liable to be injured by too much wet weather, and is also liable to be destroyed by a large red ant, called by the French the *parajol* ants, which are very numerous in all new settled islands in the West-Indies. From these circumstances it frequently happens in the ceded islands, that the crops of yams do not exceed 5 or 6000 weight whereas in Antigua and St. Kitts they often gain from 15 to 35,000 weight per acre.

negroes, it will still be attended with great advantage, and be much better than applying the land to the growth of the cane; even though much more were produced upon it than Mr. Walker calculates.

I am convinced, indeed, that 15,000 hogf-heads of sugar are much too small a quantity to be expected from 100,000 acres of land *entirely ingrossed by the sugar-cane*. Mr. Ellis's account accords much better with my experience. He says, p. 45. that at Jamaica they have about 160,000 acres of land incanes, and p. 48. that they make about 80,000 hogfheads.*

Should

* It is to be observed, that lands cultivated in canes are not constantly cropped. In Antigua and some other islands, they generally have about one third in fallow, and in St. Kitt's, they plant half their land every year. What they plant does not yield, upon an average, quite so much as two hogfheads per acre. Provisions are an annual crop, at least; and the price of cultivating them is trifling, compared with that of canes. This expence, indeed, is supposed to be paid by the rum; but if we calculate that an acre yields two hogfheads, it will not be worth more than 2*ol.* sterl. *per ann.* and not so much in any other place as at St. Kitt's, where the land yields more, and the sugar is in general of a superior quality to that in any other island. Add to this, that plantains improve land much, and yams are a fallow crop, as beneficial to the land, as a crop of turneps are in England.

Should this calculation be right, as I believe it nearly is, a further benefit will result to the planter from cultivating provisions instead of sugar, than the bare supplying himself, without laying out money to purchase food, we shall produce 25,000 hogsheads of sugar less than usual, with Rum in proportion. Mr. Walker, indeed, supposes this quantity to have been taken off, by the American markets, besides the 17,000 hogsheads of refined sugar they imported from England. But if it were so, this sugar used to be received by the Americans in payment for provisions and lumber; so that it will be equally beneficial to the islanders to produce their own provisions, as to exchange so much sugar and Rum with the Americans for those articles. Besides this, it is notorious that the Americans carried from the islands, large sums of money, which they laid out in the foreign ones in the purchase of molasses, in order to distil it into Rum, to supply those other markets which must now be furnished directly from our islands.

If it be insisted that 100,000 acres of sugar-cane land must be employed to raise the
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provisions, which the insular colonies require; in that case the benefit will not be less to the planter, but rather the contrary. We shall then produce 50,000 hogsheads of sugar less with a proportionable quantity of Rum, which will, therefore, be out of the market.

My sentiments upon the American consumption I have already declared; but even if Mr. Walker's account be true, the taking only the surplus of 25,000 hogsheads, and Rum in proportion,* out of the market, will have the effect of raising the price of that which remains; and the same sum of money will

* The proportion of rum to sugar, in the Leeward Islands, is about two puncheons of rum to three hogsheads of sugar. In Barbadoes, it is about the same quantity of rum as of *Muscovado* sugar; from which it appears, that the island of Barbadoes will be more essentially injured by a failure of a market for this rum than any other island. And, although, by cultivating the land in provisions, less quantity of sugar and rum will be made; yet, if the islanders should be obliged to purchase lumber and staves from countries which will not receive rum in exchange, they will be distressed for the means of making their payments. And I fear there is no effectual or adequate means of redress, but by lowering the duties in England, so as to increase the consumption of that article.

will be produced by the less that had been the larger quantity, and the freight, &c. will be saved. But how much more advantageous will it be to the planters, if my account of the quantity consumed by the Americans be just, and 50,000 hogsheds less are produced than at present!

To shew that Mr. Walker is mistaken, in the supposition of the quantity of sugar purchased by the Americans, I shall beg leave to avail myself of Mr. Ellis's evidence, p. 49. He says, "that, from the best calculation he can make, the amount of the American imports into Jamaica is about 150,000l. sterling, *per annum*, with which, and some money, they purchase Jamaica produce." Now if we suppose they purchase 9,000 puncheons of Rum, in that island, (which I believe is the quantity they may consume of that article) and lay out a very few thousand pounds, in the purchase of slaves, mahogany, cotton, ginger, &c. there will not be left above 70,000l. with which to purchase sugar. That sum will buy but little, if any thing, above 3,500 hogsheds, if it were laid out in that produce; for as the Americans generally,

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in the British colonies, purchase none but the best and brightest sugar they can procure, and also pay for the casks; the Jamaica sugar, which is bought by them, must bring nearly 20l. sterling the hoghead.

This, I think, sufficiently proves Mr. Walker's mistake, respecting the quantity of sugar bought by the North-Americans, from our islands; as it is evident, from all accounts, that Jamaica, in its produce and commerce, is nearly equal to all the other sugar-colonies. At the same time I by no means allow that the Americans purchase any thing like the quantity above-mentioned. It is notorious that many of them have always been accustomed to sell part of their cargoes and some the whole for cash, which they laid out in the French, Dutch and Danish islands for coffee, molasses, sugar, taffia, teas, and other East-Indian as well as European goods.*

I flatter

* I have been informed by a gentleman of rank, who formerly resided in Jamaica, in a station which gave him the best means of gaining information, and whose abilities and integrity secured him from being imposed on, or attempting to deceive others by false information, that the commodities imported into that island from North America,

I flatter myself, sir, that you are by this time fully convinced of the truth of what I asserted, respecting the account of the distressed situation of the Leeward islands, which has been given at the bar of the house of commons; and that the gentlemen, who delivered their evidence, to this point, beheld the inconveniences the islands were likely to suffer through a medium that magnified them egregiously. Such exaggeration has, I apprehend, been no small inducement, to the tyrannical assertors of mistaken liberty in America, "to boast themselves that they could do mischief," and to threaten that they would starve the islands; for by this they vainly hoped to compel Great-Britain to comply with all their unreasonable demands. Such accounts have been productive of farther mischief,

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America, in the year 1752, was of the gross value of 112,835*l*. and the price of the goods and produce they carried away with them amounted to no more than 29,222*l*. The difference, therefore, they carried away in cash to the French islands, to purchase their produce or other commodities with. And I am well convinced the intercourse of the North Americans with the French and other foreign islands has not lessened since that period.

chief. They have lessened the credit of the sugar-colonies, not only in Great-Britain, but in the other parts of Europe. Many large sums of money had been negociated for, and were ready to have been advanced, from Holland and Hamburgh, to the planters; but when they found, from such respectable but mistaken evidence, so solemnly delivered before the commons of Great-Britain, and received without contradiction; that the well-being and security, nay the very existence of the British plantations, in the West-Indies, depended upon the return of the Americans to their duty: is it to be wondered that they refused to complete their engagements?

Perhaps, it may be urged against me, that in this representation I have verged towards the contrary extreme, to that which I have blamed in others; and that I have made as light of the injury the commerce of the West-Indies is likely to sustain from the stoppage of their intercourse with America, as it has been too highly exaggerated by them. But I am confident, that a due examination will verify what I have said; since, to the best of my knowledge and judgment, I have

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related the plain matters of fact, and have endeavoured to shew the real condition of that part of the commonwealth which Mr. Walker's account would rather induce our rulers to abandon as incapable of being protected. It has, I presume, been fully proved, that the islands may be very easily protected; and if the inhabitants perform their part, very little remains to be done by others; and this they may reasonably hope for and expect. Such being the real state of the insular affairs, I hope I am now warranted in saying, that the West-Indies will ultimately be benefited by the barbarous attempt the Americans have made to sacrifice the inhabitants, from whom they do not even pretend to have received the least injury. But I trust the islanders shall never more lie at their mercy; they have already experienced "that the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel."

Notwithstanding all that has been advanced by me on this subject, I do not mean to be understood to assert, that the islands will suffer no distress; on the contrary, I acknowledge they will all, in different degrees, be subjected to much temporary inconvenience. It would
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be absurd to suppose, when the British oak is shaken to the root, by the violence of the storm, that the tender branches at the extremities shall not be agitated. What I contend for is, that we shall not suffer more than a temporary injury; the greatest part even of that, will not be general, but will chiefly affect the improvident: perhaps, the number of those will be greater than humanity would wish.

It has been already said, that the months of July and August are those in which the want of provisions will be most severely felt. And I fear small quantities (I mean comparatively small) of flower, peas and split beans, have been sent out; which (until a proper quantity of cassava meal be provided) should be kept in store to answer emergencies, and prevent the fatal effects which will be consequent of a hurricane, if any shall happen.

As to the articles of lumber and white oak staves, for Rum punchcons, there will probably be much distress for want of them, until proper steps are taken in this kingdom to supply us. The intrinsic value of all that is wanted is not very considerable. From Mr.

Ellis's

Ellis's calculation the amount of lumber and American provisions, together, does not arise to more than 300,000*l*. (supposing Jamaica to consume a moiety of the whole). Two thirds of that sum must certainly have been paid for provisions, the greatest part of which they must now raise themselves. Staves, for sugar casks, are now made in sundry of the islands, much cheaper than they ever were imported from America; and, therefore, there will be no want of a fund in England to purchase such provisions, Lumber, and staves as are absolutely necessary (even at the present high price of the latter articles,) out of the Rum and sugar which has been sent home, instead of being paid to the Americans for those commodities.

Rum, upon an average, has sold this year at upwards of 2*s*. per gallon; and if we allow that 30,000 puncheons of Rum have been sent to Europe, Africa, and to supply the King's troops, in America, in lieu of being bartered with the Americans, their produce will amount at 2*s*. per gallon, to 300,000*l*. to which add the amount of 10,000 hogsheds of sugar; which, I am confident, is as much as ever

went

went to America from the British sugar-colonies, and from hence, as refined sugar, and the whole amount of the extra fund will be no less than 440,000*l.* sufficient surely for the purposes above-mentioned; but if there be any persons who shall not have exerted the means in their power to avert the dangers, which threatened them, and supply the necessities, they had reason to expect would press them; it is not the less true, that the islanders have the resources in themselves, though it be possible they may ~~not~~ all have availed themselves thereof. And I again repeat, that, however the West-India planters may be injured, in the present unhappy conjuncture of affairs, a most beneficial and permanent advantage will result from it. They will no longer sacrifice every thing to the sugar-cane, "as trifles to the principal object;" they will find it their interest to cultivate more provisions and less sugar and Rum. And if any persons shall neglect to plant sufficient for the maintenance of their negroes, it is to be hoped, they will be compelled thereto by a proper law for that purpose. In some of the islands such laws are in force; and if I am
not

not mistaken a similar law makes a part of the French *code noir*; and particular care is taken, in their islands, to see it strictly executed. With respect to the article of lumber, I have no doubt but the wisdom of the legislature of this kingdom will readily enact such laws to cherish and protect the commerce of the islands, as shall be found expedient and salutary. They will not suffer the colonies to be distressed, which are of so much importance. The sugar alone pays a duty of no less than 500,000*l.* per annum, besides a much larger sum which will be paid on Rum; if all that is made be sent to Great Britain, even, although the duties shall be considerably lessened.

I further flatter myself that, when the successes of his majesty's arms, in America; shall have emancipated his loyal and oppressed subjects there, from the slavery of the detestable negroes, who now tyrannize over them; that, in the future regulations, of the commerce of that country, care will be taken, as much as may be, to confine that which they carry on to the West-Indies, to the British sugar colonies: to the prevention of the injury our
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islands have always hitherto suffered, by being drained of all their current cash; which has been expended amongst our rivals in the purchase of commodities which ought to be supplied by their fellow-subjects, or of molasses which the French colonies could otherwise turn to very little account; to the great detriment of our colonies, as well as the nation in general. These points, properly attended to, will turn the temporary evils we have suffered, into a real and permanent advantage.

I am, &c. &c.

London, Oct. 10, 1776.

F I N I S.

From whence		barrels flour	barrels bread	kegs of bread	tierces rice
Philadelphia	19464	3163	2584	202	
Virginia	1743	517			
Rhode Island	122	63	700	1	
New London	24	51	337		
Salem	87	12	240		
Nova Scotia					

A P P E N D I X.

THE writer of the foregoing letter, having been favoured by a friend, with copies of the Custom-house accounts, of imports and exports, to and from the island of Jamaica, for the year 1775, the year preceding the engagements of the rebellious colonies, not to trade with the British sugar-islands; thinks it may elucidate the subject under consideration to give them to the public. It is to be reasonably supposed, as both parties would be induced to supply themselves, with something more than their usual quantity, on account of the threatened interruption of their future intercourse, both the imports and exports were more considerable than in former years.





